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ABSTRACT

A theoretical framework of written language use and development that emerged from a two-year case study of one child's writing at home and in school during kindergarten and first grade is presented. First, the paper describes three elements which are found throughout the framework: the social web of experience, writing as relationships, and writers' agendas. Second, the paper presents the theoretical framework which consists of three basic parts: determinants, components, and themes of written language. Third, the paper discusses written language activity within the theoretical framework. Fourth, the paper examines writers' experience in the light of this theoretical framework. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of some implications of a theoretical framework of this nature. Six figures representing various aspects of the framework and one table presenting a summary of the thematic analysis showing differences between home and school writing of the young first-grade writer are included; a list of 51 references is attached. (RS)

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Theoretical Framework for Written Language Use and Development

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR WRITTEN LANGUAGE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this paper is to present a theoretical framework of written language use and development which emerged from a two year case study of one child's writing at home and in school during kindergarten and first grade. I consider it a framework because it is, in some ways, bare and awaits application to other settings. First, I describe three elements which are found throughout the framework: the social web of experience, writing as relationships, and writers' agendas. Second, I present the theoretical framework which consists of three basic parts: determinants, components, and themes of written language. Third, I discuss written language activity (Leont'ev, 1981) within the theoretical framework. Fourth, writers' experience (Dewey, 1938) is examined in light of this theoretical framework. I conclude the paper with a brief discussion of some implications of a theoretical framework of this nature.

I have not found it possible to separate use from development because writers are continually involved with use and development to the point that the two consistently overflow into each other (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983). The various literatures upon which I have drawn to substantiate this framework of written language development and use and the analyses of writing across the home and school settings (Meyer, 1992) support this notion of inseparability.

Three Elements of the Theoretical Framework

Throughout the discussion of the theoretical framework I make reference to the social web of experience, writing as involving relationships, and writers' agendas. Each of these is presented briefly below as background for the presentation of the theoretical framework.

The Social Web of Experience

Writing experiences and activities take place within a complex social web. The web is a metaphor I use to describe the writer situated in her life as a living, growing, learning person involved in her literacy development. The social web of writing experiences extends across all the settings in which the writer lives and grows. It is ongoing experience in the Deweyian (1938) sense extended over the writer's full range of experiences, indeed her entire life. The web consists of school experiences, home experiences, and experiences in the community. It includes relationships with individuals and the tenors (Halliday, 1978) of those relationships. The web changes as the writer's life progresses. The metaphor of a web is particularly useful because activity in one part of the web may cause response throughout the entire web.

The metaphor of a web is also useful because of the nature of the strands of a web. The strands are separate in nature, but make contact with other strands by being directly or indirectly connected to them. A single strand, such as a writing activity, which is added to the web both retains and loses its separateness. Thus past, present, and future experiences are constantly changing as more

strands, in the forms of activities and experiences, accumulate within the web.

The social web of experience is a personal construction within a social context. Bock (1989), in her study of developing readers discusses Vygotsky (1978) as:

> suggest[ing] that cognitive development occurs first in an external or social context. Observations [of the children in her study], as they developed an understanding of the social processes, demonstrate the significance of their internalization. In fact, social process was a key variable . . . in their [literacy] growth . . . (p. 9)

A writer, deeply embedded in social situations, is ultimately the one who decides about her writing. The decisions she makes have an impact on how successful she is in certain situations and the degree to which others understand what she has written. The writer's growing understanding of the social situation allows her to make subsequent decisions which in turn effect her in subsequent situations.

Certain social situations make a great impact upon the web, causing the developing writer to 'string more strands'. This relates to the issue of ownership in writing. A writer pays attention to what happens to her, to the responses to her writing, across various situations. The reception which the writing activity (or product) meets will effect future writing in that social situation. The writer, in turn, responds to the ways in which her writing is received by making adjustments to what and how and why she writes.

Thus, writing activities (Leont'ev, 1981) which are required by someone outside the writer, as in the case of a workbook page, are social occasions during which the writer learns what is acceptable as appropriate writing in that situation. Her activity in a setting leads her to string a strand of her web which she can call upon in subsequent workbook page situations to know the range of acceptable responses. The writer searches the repertoire of accumulated strands in her web for what closely matches what is demanded of her and offers a response accordingly. This same process occurs, but is of a different quality, when the writing experience is more authentic or genuine for the writer. This parallels findings about reading. (Bloome, 1983).

The social web of experience in which a writer writes defines the various systems of meanings in the writer's life and reflects her current level of understanding of those meanings in particular situations. This includes her understanding of relationships and the permissions and prohibitions inherent in those relationships. The flexibility of the web and the writer's understanding of it are reflected in the processes of negotiation in which the writer engages at various settings. The social web includes within its strands, by its very nature, the structures of participation (Philips, 1971) that exist for the writer within and across settings. Thus a writer will change her writing and even the way she talks about her writing depending on where she is doing that writing. This is because relationships are inherent in the social web.

Writing is Relationships

Relationships are inherent in written language use and written language development. In this section I discuss written language as a relationship; in a later section I discuss the tenor (Halliday, 1978) of the relationship. Written language would not be written language without relationships; this might involve relationships with the self, other individuals, institutions, and more. Based on Rosenblatt (1978), I define writing as the *the production of sets or series of signs interpretable as linguistic symbols* . This definition is language based and meaning based. Relationships are implied in the definition because individuals are involved with the use and interpretation of the signs.

When relationships are involved, they have a tenor (Halliday, 1978). Some relationships involve power or authoritarian roles and others rely more on partnership or collaboration. Relationships in school and out of school are effected by permission. Permission has to do with movement, materials, topic of writing, initiation of the writing activity, and more, all of which are rooted in relationships with others and self.

Throughout the discussion which follows, I discuss developing writers as having agendas. I elaborate on the notion of agendas first, before turning to the discussion of the determinants, components, and themes of the theoretical framework.

Writers Have Agendas

Within the social web of their experiences at any given point in time, when writers put pencil to paper, they deal with many issues. They want to make meaning (Wells. 1986), sometimes to be

shared. The making of meaning is one issue with which a writer must deal when using written language. Many issues are attached to the making of meaning with written language. The writer must use the cueing systems of written language: the graphophonic, the syntactic, the semantic, and the pragmatic (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987). Within each of these systems, the writing activity is determined by the field she (or another) has chosen, the tenor of relationships with those in the setting or others with whom the written language activity might come in contact, and the mode (Halliday, 1978).

Regardless of the setting, a writer deals with the complexities of writing summarized in the preceding paragraph. I refer to a writer's agenda as the issues which assume an urgency for the writer. She might be focusing on getting some message or meaning across to others. She may become conscious of some limitations or problems or oddities or salient features of the writing activity which are not meeting her needs or demands. Something may become a bit more urgent for her during the activity. This might range from wanting to know how to write the sound at the end of 'fish', when no single grapheme makes that sound by itself, to wanting to be understood by an individual to whom the writer is writing a postcard and more. As she makes decisions about the variability and acceptability of the text's complexity, she also decides which features of the text she will address with greater energy or urgency because those features are salient to her. The features become parts of her writing agenda. Her agenda spans all the systems of written language; however making meaning is

always an agenda item when written language is viewed as defined earlier.

Most often for the young writer, as Calkins (1983), Graves (1983), and others (Bissex, 1980; Schickendanz, 1990) have shown, an agenda item becomes apparent during the course of written language activity. Addressing the agenda means using the resources available to remove the urgency from each issue related to the written language activity. Agendas may be addressed by a writer alone or in partnership with the activity and people in her life and mind. An example of the urgency of an agenda issue is found in Meyer (1992) when Zoe, the young writer in that study, wrote her letter to John Denver. She wanted to spell his name correctly after she had started to write. She paused, dropped her pencil, ran to get the audio cassette tape case with his name on it, and returned to her writing with the case as a resource. Zoe addressed one agenda item, the conventional spelling of a name, and returned to another item, the making of meaning.

A developing writer's agenda is grounded within and across the settings in which she lives. The agenda spans all settings and grows and changes as a function of the settings and the writer's developing understanding of the uses of written language within the settings. A writing agenda is, then, transactional (Rosenblatt, 1978) and exists within the social web of her experiences. A writer might address her agenda within, because of, or in spite of the different settings in which she finds herself.

A writer's agenda, by its definition, is based in authentic writing activity (Wortman, 1991) when the agenda which realizes

itself in written language activity emanates from and belongs to the writer. In these situations, the writer is the point of origin of her agenda. A developing writer learns which settings support the addressing of her agenda, which settings support the expansion or elaboration of her agenda, and in which settings she must set her agenda aside to deal with someone else's agenda. She learns when she can be the point of origin of her written language activity and when she must yield, allowing another to be the point of origin.

If the school has a written language program which is interpreted in the classroom by the teacher alone and if that program does not address the young writer's agenda, the writer must make a choice. She might abandon her agenda to ensure school success, she might adopt the school agenda and maintain her own agenda privately, or she might appear as a failure in school because she refuses to yield to the school's agenda. Zoe, the young writer in Meyer's (1992) study, participated in an underground network of writers. The children in her kindergarten classroom shared phone numbers and other information unbeknownst to the teacher. They addressed their own agendas of written language use and development.

Theoretical Framework of Written Language Use and Development

The theoretical framework of written language use and development which is presented here consists of three parts: determinants, components, and themes of written language. The determinants of written language development and use are field, tenor and mode (Halliday, 1978). As determinants, field, tenor, and mode are discussed in relation to the two other parts of the framework. The second part of the theoretical framework is the components of written language development and use. The third part focuses on the themes of written language development and use. These three parts make up the theoretical framework, acting as a system.

The determinants, themes, and components of written language development and use effect each other. They effect the zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) which the writer opens. They effect the writer's development by having an effect upon: the relationships the writer is involved in; the writer's agenda and the way that agenda is addressed; and the writer's social web of experience. Although I discuss each of these parts separately, it is important to keep in mind that they do not exist or operate separately. It is the nature of the system of written language development that its parts operate simultaneously and in conjunction and response to each other.

Determinants of Written Language Use and Development

Halliday (1978) presents three determinants of oral language use, field, tenor, and mode, which also apply to written language development and use (Meyer, 1992). Basic to this discussion is that "learning language, learning through language, and learning about language . . . collectively constitute what education is about" (Halliday, 1988, p.35).

Halliday (1978) offers the following to explain field and tenor:

> Field refers to the institutional setting in which a piece of language occurs, and embraces not only the subject-matter in hand but the whole activity of the speaker or participant in a setting. . . . Tenor . . . refers to the relationship between participants...not merely variation in formality . . . but such questions as the permanence or otherwise of the relationship and the degree of emotional charge to it. (p. 33)

The tenor is "the personal relationships involved" (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 31). At school there is tenor with teachers, other children, the principal, etc. At home, one has personal relationships with parents, siblings, friends, pets, community members, etc.

The mode of discourse is the way in which language is expressed (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 34). Mode might be oral speech in the form of a dialogue or a monologue, or it may be some form of written language. Doughty, Pearce, and Thornton (1972) suggest that "mode refers to the channel of communication adopted, not only the choice between spoken and written medium, but much more detailed choices" (pp. 185-186). I consider mode, then, to include the choice of writing surface, the implement used, the sizes and shapes of each, and more.

Halliday (1978) explains field, tenor, and mode further:

> Field refers to the ongoing activity and the particular purposes that the use of language is serving within the context of that activity; tenor refers to the interrelations among the participants (status and role relationships); and mode covers roughly Hymes' channel, key, and genre. . . . The categories of field, tenor, and mode are thus determinants and not components of speaking; collectively they serve to predict text. . . . (p.64)

I use field, tenor, and mode to understand the systems of meaning which are occurring at a given point in time at a given setting:

> The semiotic structure of a situation type can be represented as a complex of three dimensions: the ongoing social activity, the role relationships involved, and the symbolic or rhetorical channel. We refer to these respectively as 'field', 'tenor' and 'mode'. . . . The field is the social action in which the text is embedded; it includes the subject-matter, as one special manifestation. The tenor is the the set of role relationships among the relevant participants; it includes levels of formality as one particular instance. The mode is the channel or wavelength selected . . . it includes the medium. (Halliday, 1978, p.110)

The field, tenor, and mode of written language determine how language will make meaning at a given time. Halliday (1978) continues:

> . . . a *social context* (or 'situation', in terms of situation theory) is a temporary construct or instantiation of meanings from the social system. A social context is a semiotic structure which we may interpret in terms of three variables: a 'field' of social process (what is going on), a 'tenor' of social relationships (who is taking apart) and a 'mode' of symbolic interaction (how are the meanings exchanged). If we are focusing on language, this last category of 'mode' refers to what part the language is playing in the situation under consideration. (p. 188)

Field, tenor, and mode,then, are the determinants of written language use and development.

Components of Written Language Use and Development

In this section I present the components of written language development and use as part of the theoretical framework. *Components* refer to the constitution of a specific written language activity in which a writer is engaging at a given moment. The components are: point of origin; motive; ownership; use (consisting of purpose or intention, function, and type or genre); operation; goal; and response. The components overflow into each other and many may occur simultaneously.

Point of Origin

Written language has a point of origin. It is the point which is at the intersection of the writer's creation of a particular text in a specific setting, her written language agenda, and her life and experiences in her social web. The point is a personal instance in a social context. The point of origin has roots in the writer's life experiences and her experiences at the particular setting. It is her impetus for involvement in the writing activity (interacting with ownership to produce a motive). The point of origin may be a desire to share emotions, a need which the writer wants met, a creative urge, and more.

When another person or institution assigns a child to write something, that other imposes on the child as the point of origin, or, at the very least, has an impact upon the point of origin. Field,

tenor, and mode determine much about the point of origin. An authoritarian teacher who requires that certain subjects be written about on specific paper with a particular type of pencil has made many decisions for the writer which will effect the writer's production of a written piece, what she will learn from the piece, and the authenticity of the piece. The child's understanding of written language use at the particular setting is also effected.

The messages the child understands from such settings have much to do with the writer's ownership (Atwell, 1987) of her writing. Writers learn where and when they can initiate a written text and what the tacit and explicit rules are which apply to or will be applied to the text.

A point of origin involves a writer's own private past, the past she shares with those she is writing to, with, and about, and the present and future as well. Her safety and success are issues in every piece she writes, although she may rarely verbalize such issues. The point of origin is related to choice, which I refer to as ownership.

Ownership

Ownership (Hansen, 1987) means degree or amount of choice a writer has: in the initiation of written activity, in the way in which the activity proceeds, in the decisions about terminating the activity, and in issues related to making the completed piece public. When choices are made for the writer, she has a smaller repertoire of choices in which she can be directly involved. The tenor of relationships, one of the determinants, between the child and

anyone involved in the decision-making process effects ownership. A writer learns to be independent when she is allowed to make many choices for herself. The choices she makes are informed by the setting in which she is writing and her social web of experience.

Field, tenor, and mode determine ownership. For example, when a young writer is told to write each of her spelling words three times, she writes in a very restricted field reflective of the tenor of her relationship with her teacher. The importance and impact of time, how it is used, and who determines its use (field-related issues) have an impact on ownership. Writers need time to explore and experiment. They need time to raise and address their own agenda of written language issues (Atwell, 1987; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984).

The mode of writing (including, but not limited to, writing on specific paper with particular implements) also effects ownership. A writer needs to make decisions about the tools she uses in her craft.

Calkins (1991) asks, "[h]ow can we expect students to write with vigor and voice if they are silenced throughout the rest of the day?" (p.4). The questions of silence, participation, and choice reach the core of how we view children and their development as writers. When a young writer assumes increased ownership of her writing, she addresses important events in her life and the people comprising those events; she addresses her agenda for written language use.

The importance of Calkins' question is that it pertains to expectations (Cambourne, 1984). Parents and teachers need to

expect that children have a writing agenda, that children can and will make choices as writers, and that over time their agenda may very well extend beyond the agenda others might put forth and demand that the children follow. The focus on the child in terms of ownership also raises the distinction between self-regulatory and self-controlled (Diaz, Neal, & Amay-Williams, 1990) writing activity. When parents and teachers allow a young writer to make choices about the content and technical facets of her writing experiences, they are supporting self-regulatory behavior rather than subscribing to a behavioristic belief in self-control.

Self-regulation involves the writer making choices, assuming ownership of her written language activity, in order to address her writing agenda. Writing assumes an increased importance and sometimes an increased urgency for the writer as she makes choices relevant to her work. Leont'ev's (1981) use of motive relates to point of origin and ownership.

Motive

The motive a writer has for engaging in written language activity is effected by her relationships with those around her or in her mind, the physical setting where she is or the one she has in mind, and the action at the setting or in her mind. The motive is effected, then, by the tenor of her relationships, the field of her writing, the mode of her writing, her agenda, and the social web. Her motive effects her use of written language and her development as a writer.

A writer learns to be flexible across settings. She learned the rules which apply to writing across a variety of settings. Her social motives, perhaps to succeed and be accepted, help her meet with success across settings. Although I am not convinced that the focus in school on the graphophonic and syntactic systems of written language are particularly beneficial to the young writer, she can learn to succeed in that setting.

In some settings, a young writer's motive is to deal with written language as a meaning-based and language-based activity. As such, she addresses graphophonic and syntactic agenda items in the context of language- and meaning-based writing activities. When she is involved in making meaning with written language, she asks questions about, uses, experiments with, and internalizes the conventions of written language. Her use and development coincide, motivated by her desire to make meaning with written language.

Motive, then, is determined by field, tenor, and mode. More immediately, in specific writing activities, motive appears to be generated with the point of origin and ownership of the activity. When a teacher makes specific demands on a writer, the writer's point of origin is strongly influenced by someone outside of the writer. The writer loses ownership if she must address some one else's written language agenda. Motive, in such a situation, will center around appeasing someone through the act, though not necessarily the content, of writing. An example of this is when a young writer wrote solely to meet the teacher's requirement of filling a page for creative writing by writing many lines of '*the end the end the end* ' (Meyer, 1992). She did not consider the content of

the story as much as she considered reaching the last line of the sheet of paper.

Use

Use is purpose (intention) and function. These refer to the purpose and function of a particular piece at a specific time and place. The explanation of use is more accurate when it also includes type or genre. Ownership and the point of origin are reflected in the writer's motive to write. These give way to use as the writer engages in the written language activity. Use, as with the other parts of this theory, is determined by the field, tenor, and mode of the written language activity at a particular setting.

For example, spelling books--a very specific genre-- do not provide a place for a writer to deal with her written language agenda because they do not provide the conditions she needs to identify agenda items. The books **do** help her learn about teacher expectations of spelling activity in the classroom. In terms of the social web of her experience as a writer, she learns how to successfully complete spelling book. This is a use of written language which limits purpose to completion and, functionally, serves more of an economic purpose (finish the task to buy your way out of it) more than a linguistic one.

Purpose. The writer's purposes for engaging in a specific writing activity reflect her life at the given moment when she is writing. Determined by field, tenor, and mode, she writes because of a specific request, an assignment, an urge, a demand, a provocation, a creative inspiration etc. She might write to request something or

to appease some one. Each purpose builds or contributes to the writer's belief system about writing in a particular setting (themes) and to the writer's understanding of the functions of written language. She also learns about the limits and boundaries for addressing her own writing agenda at the setting. This is the point at which purpose overflows into function.

Function. Function is a more general category than purpose, describing how, in a broader sense, written language is being used. Just as the writer might use written language to be involved with other people, the use of written language is restricted or elaborated by those very relationships. The restrictive or elaborative nature of the setting has an impact on the writer's active addressing of her agenda and therefore her development. This is not meant to imply that all writing involves other individuals. Writing may involve the spiritual, responses to nature and more. My point is that the functions of written language, as Smith (1983) describes them, influence development. A writer who is supported in her writing, in which many functions are manifested, has an opportunity for development. I discuss this in terms of the zone of proximal development below.

Types or genres. The writer may choose or invent a particular type or genre of writing or the type or genre may be assigned or required at a particular setting during a particular writing activity. The choice or lack of choice reflects the determinants and themes of written language at the setting. When a writer is offered, either vicariously or explicitly, many types or genres of written language to explore and given the freedom to address her writing agenda, she

expands her written language repertoire. This results in her social web of experiences increasing in quality and complexity. She may even invent genres or types of writing which are new, to her if not to the world of writers. Use manifests itself in a physically visible document through operation (Leont'ev, 1981).

Operation

The writer's operation is the physical activity in which she engages to produce a written text. Operation is determined by mode and relates to motive, discussed above, and goal, discussed below. Operation involves ideas and thoughts being placed on paper, for example, through a physical act. It includes sharpening the pencil and finding paper and locating a place to work, and forming the letters or symbols which represent thoughts and meaning. There is a social facet to operation which is determined by the tenor of relationships at a setting.

As the writer operates, she uses written language and she develops as a writer. She learns by producing text, by thinking about text, by responding to text. During and after the operation of written language, the writer transacts (Rosenblatt, 1978) with her text, usually as the first reader of it. She transacts with it before it is written as she visualizes what it might be. During certain writing activities, she may be surprised (Murray, 1985) by what she finds herself writing and the meaning it brings to her. When the piece is complete, it may then serve the writer in addressing her goals.

Goal

The writer's goals relate to her motives and to the operations she uses. She is motivated to meet her goal and uses the operations available to her to do so. There is a tension or dialectic within the writer as she deals with her goals, motives, and operations (LeFevre, 1987). She addresses issues which arise regarding the many aspects of written language. These are instances of written language development as well as use.

Goals are determined by field, tenor, and mode and reflect the use of the piece. The writer's relationships with those involved with her writing, and they need not be physically present, permeate the activity. Other individuals, besides the writer, have goals for the writer. These effect the writer's goals as well. At times, the young writer may loose, sacrifice, or set aside ownership of her writing agenda when she deals with assignments such as writing each of her spelling words three times.

Response

The response the writer receives begins with herself, as the first reader of her piece involved in a transaction with it. Others might also have the opportunity or obligation to respond, their responses being reflective of the field, tenor, and mode which are tacitly or explicitly attached to the piece.

Writers learn what types of responses to expect at various settings as they come to understand the nature of the settings. Responses effect development because they have an effect on the writer's addressing of her agenda and the nature of her social web.

Knowing the type of response she might receive leads the writer to use written language differently across various settings. She learns where written language is restrictive and restricted and where elaborative uses of writing are supported. She learns this as a result of the specific responses to her writing over time and across settings. She learns which strands of her web of experience, as she constructs them, apply at each setting. Figure 1 shows the relationship between each of the components of the theoretical framework which have been discussed in this section.

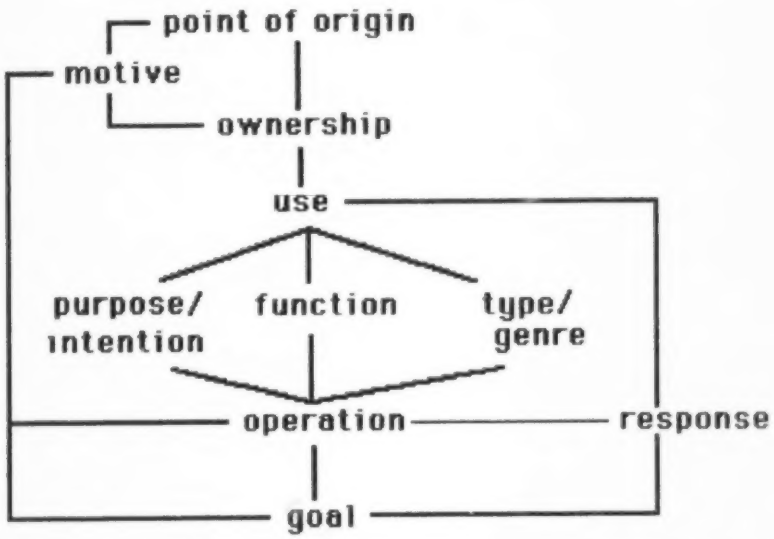

Figure 1. The relationship between the components of written language.

All of the components of a written language activity which I've just explained take place within and contribute to the definitions of the themes of written language development and use at a particular

setting. The themes are explained as part of the theoretical framework in the next section.

Themes of Written Language in the Theoretical Framework

Themes are reflective of patterns over time. They are helpful in understanding a given written language activity, may be somewhat predictive of, and can only be identified and articulated after much consideration of, written language activity at a setting. Six themes appear to exist at settings in which writers write. The themes, although extant across settings, are operationally defined within each specific context. The themes are: orientation, resources, use, structuring, valuing, and properties. They differ from the components discussed earlier in terms of time. Components are facets of a particular written language activity, while themes emerge across many written language activities over time at a particular setting. The manifestation and parameters of the themes have an impact on the writer's development and use of written language.

Orientation

Orientation is the beliefs held about writing by those at a particular setting. Orientations vary across individuals as well as across settings. Orientations include beliefs about: whether writing is work or play, whether it is self-directed or other-directed, whether a writer is a source and resource or an empty vessel, and whether writing is taught through direct explicit instruction or constructed by the writer. Orientation affects the other themes at a

given setting. It is an overarching theme because the belief system at a particular setting influences the written language activity at that setting. The field, tenor, and mode at settings over time determine the realization of the themes specific to those particular settings.

Resources

Resources are the repertoire of people and things which are available to a writer seeking information about written language at a particular setting.

Uses

Uses are the explicit or implicit reasons for writing at a given setting. Uses include how and why written language is used: language and meaning-based uses, economic uses, and uses for control or order (when the teacher asks children to copy a poem they can not read so that she might conduct reading groups). I realize that this might cause confusion with the 'use' I employ as part of the components of written language. Essentially, it is the same concept but understood over time at the setting to the point where it becomes a theme, rather than a use in terms of a particular piece's function, purpose, and genre.

Structuring

Structuring is the way in which written activity is initiated and carried out. It involves noting who serves as the point of origin for a piece and the choices open to the writer. How activities are

structured and the individuals involved in that structuring are manifestations of the tenor of relationships with which a writer must deal .

Valuing

Valuing has to do with acceptability of and response to written language, including who is involved in the acceptability and how a relationship might effect the reception of a piece.

Properties

Properties of written language have to do with the modes and focus on mechanical or surface features of written language. Properties have to do with what the finished pieces looks like and what is acceptable while a piece is in progress. An individual writer may hold different beliefs about writing, compared to those around her. This may cause some confusion or discomfort, depending on the tenor of relationships of those involved. Table 1 (from Meyer, 1992) demonstrates how the themes may be realized differently across two settings, the home and the school.

Table 1

Summary of the Thematic Analysis Showing the Differences Between Home and School Writing of a Young Writer in First Grade.

Theme	Home	School
Orientation (beliefs about writers/ writing)	-Life & play -Self-demanded/ directed -Writer as source -writing activity as a way to learn writing	-Work -Teacher-required/ directed -Writer as empty -Direct instruction
Use (the why and how)	-Meaning-based -Function -Purpose -Type or genre	-Mechanics-/ procedure-based -Meaning-based -Management -Economic
Properties (surface or mechanical features)	-Approximations accepted -Modes	-High priority on conventions, graphophonic and syntactic systems -Modes
Structuring (ways writing experiences are initiated and carried out)	-Child as point of origin -Activities open to variety and invention -Conditions for empowerment & use of literacy capital[1]	-Teacher as point of origin -Cautious about variety, focus on conventional activities - Power relationships & growing awareness of literacy capital

[1]The notion of literacy capital which can be turned into literacy profit for specific individuals in specific situations is from Lareau (1989)

Valuing (Response)	-By family members -Function of child's intentions	-By teacher -Function of teacher's intentions
Resources	-Family -Physical resources allocated by child	-Teacher -Physical resources allocated by teacher

The six themes overflow into each other. For example, orientation towards written language at a particular setting will have an effect on the resources, structuring, valuing, properties, and use of writing at that setting. The themes are determined by the field, tenor, and mode. The ways in which the themes manifest themselves at a particular setting influence the quality of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) of the writer and the components of written language activity discussed above. When the themes and the components reflect the writer's agenda, a high quality zone will open. When the themes are imposed and inconsistent with the writer's agenda or when the writer is forced to give up the point of origin and ownership of a piece, the result will be a low quality or no zone of proximal development.

Figure 2 presents a model of the theoretical framework as it has been presented to this point. The solid black lines inside the circle are the components of written language development and are present during any written language activity. The themes outline and define the context in which the components take place. Orientation, being so pervasive, is shown with arrows to indicate its influence on the other themes. Visualizing field, tenor, and mode as shading the entire Figure may be helpful because they determine

written language activity. The zone of proximal development is represented by the space indicated by the arrows in Figure 2.

Since all the themes, components, and determinants interact during a given written language activity, they define the boundaries of the zone of proximal development. The outer boundary of the zone of proximal development is indicated by the circumference of the circle. This is a complex framework and any single part of it will effect the quality of the zone. The writer, within her complex social web, engages in written language activity. Determinants, components, and themes define that activity. The entire framework, as it unfolds over time, contributes to the writer's educative or miseducative (Dewey, 1938, p. 36) experience. This is discussed below.

Summarizing, written language development and written language use have three determinants: field, tenor and mode; six themes: orientation, resources, purpose, structuring, valuing, and properties; and the many components discussed above and shown inside the circle in Figure 2. In the following sections I describe how operations, goals, and motives (Leont'ev, 1981) can effect the quality of the zone of proximal development. The use of goals, motives, and operations is intended to show one relationship between the zone of proximal development and activity theory. My use of goals, motives, and operations is also meant to demonstrate how a facet of the theoretical framework can impact written language development and use.

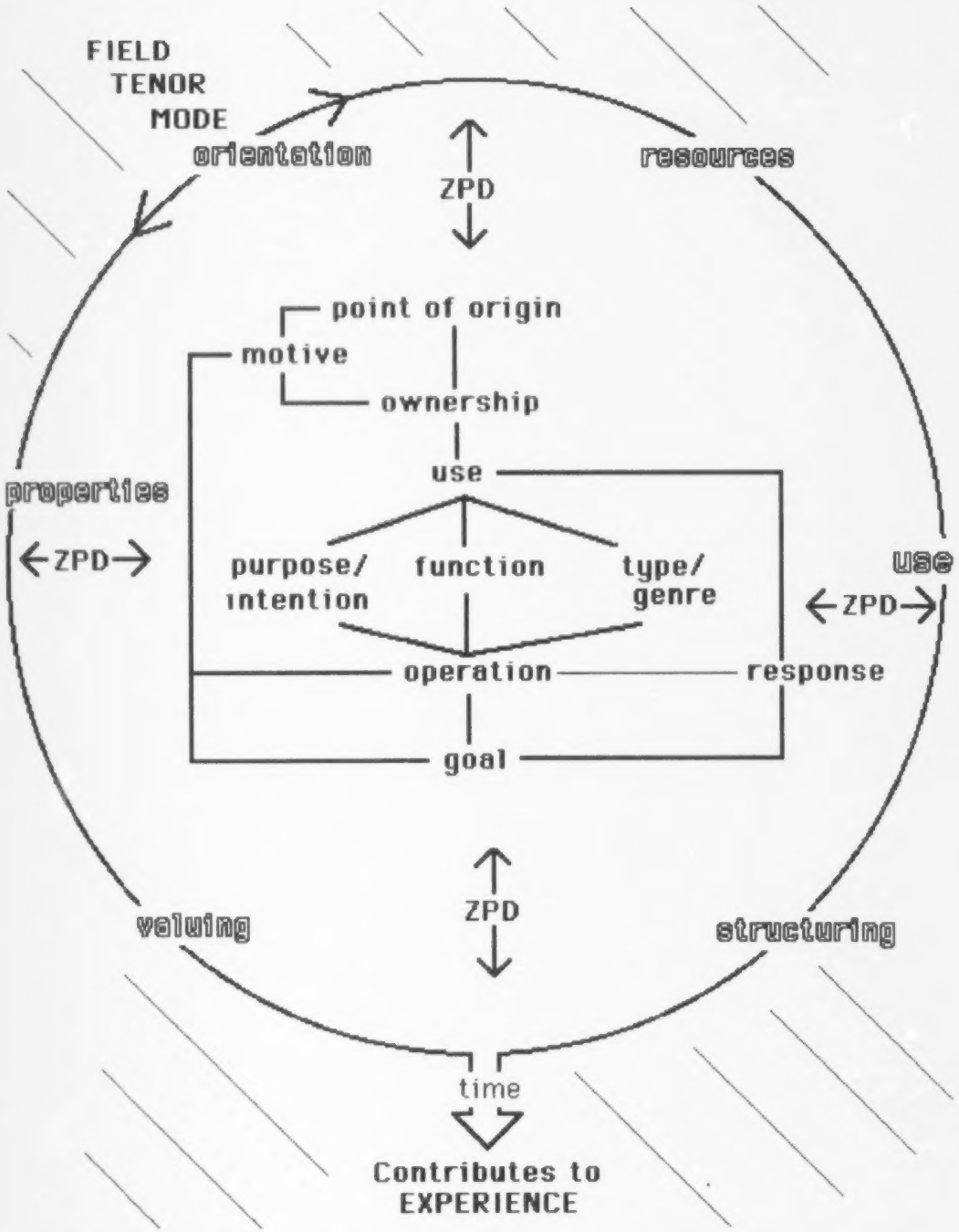

Figure 2. Theoretical framework of written language development and use. [ZPD indicates the zone of proximal development.]

Writing Activity Within the Theoretical Framework

The writing activities of the developing writer are part of the fabric of the social web of experience in which the writer writes. Figure 2 is a graphic representation of the theoretical framework, useful for understanding one instance of writing activity in the web. At various points along the web, writing activity takes place. The framework can also be used to explain how strands of the social web of written language experience are woven by using it to analyze writing activities.

The nature and quality of writing activities for the developing writer constitute the social web of written language experience. The themes, determinants, and components of the theoretical framework may serve as points of departure for understanding written language development and use in a writer's complex social web.

In this section I will use three components of written language, motives, goals, and operations, to show how these components work within the theoretical framework. I have chosen these three because they are also discussed at length in activity theory (Leont'ev, 1981). I want to show how any part of the framework can effect written language development by effecting the zone of proximal development. It is in the nature of the framework, as a system, that each of its components, themes, and determinants may have an effect upon the writer. In this section, the focus is on three of the components.

Figure 3 shows a relationship between the zone of proximal development and writing activity. Motives, goals, and operations are determined by field, tenor, and mode and are realized reflective of the themes at a particular setting.

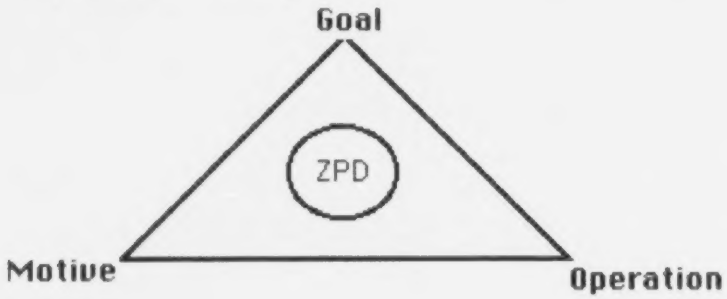

Figure 3. The relationship between the zone of proximal development and activity theory.

The zone of proximal development lies within the area created by the three components of activity. The writer's motives, goals, and operations involved in the writing activity take place within the social web of experience. As such, the writer is surrounded by the collaborative help required of a zone of proximal development. Sometimes when a developing writer puts pencil to paper there is no other person physically present. A writing activity may originate far from the sheet of paper as the writer lives in her ever-growing social web of experience.

The zone of proximal development is a *socio-psychoconstruction*. The individual writer could not construct or open a zone of proximal development without a social fabric to serve as support. The zone results from the writer's internalization of social situations through the web of that writer's experience. Thus,

an individual's experience is impossible without the social situation. That situation is a system of meanings, Halliday's (1978) semiotic, which the individual interprets at any given moment.

A writer finds, generates, and cultivates the goals of her writing activity in response to what happens around her. The use of the word 'around' here extends far from her physical surroundings to the community, or even the world as in the case of, for example, a postcard to a soldier far from home. The writing activity in which she is involved which leads to growth or change has to take place within a zone of proximal development. There are conditions which increase the distance between the points of the triangle in Figure 3, increasing the distance between goal, motive and operations. These increase the quality of the zone of proximal development.

The conditions for increased quality of the zone of proximal development lie in the components, themes, and determinants of written language at the setting. The conditions involve the writer in constructing and addressing her written language agenda. This manifests itself as a growing and high quality zone, consistent with Wortman's (1991) notion of authenticity. She becomes demanding of her social web: requesting spellings, assistance with form, learning or inventing other functions of written language which would help her achieve her goals, and more. These demands are the essence of her relationship within her social web and involve her as a writer actively opening zones of proximal development.

The Effects of Layers Upon Writing Activity

The variety of settings in which a writer finds herself may place specific demands upon the writer. Those demands, as facets of the system of meaning in a given situation, may or may not contribute to the opening of a zone of proximal development. The demands also effect the quality of the zone. I have found three possibilities (Meyer, 1992) in terms of explaining layers which are created when a writer is in a specific situation. A layer means that the writer's goals, motives, and operations are, due to the nature of the setting, contextualized within another individual's or group's goals, motives, and operations. The three possibilities are: a high quality zone of proximal development and a low quality zone of proximal development. The lowest quality situation results in no zone of proximal development opening.

Contributing to a Low Quality Zone of Proximal Development

A writer may be required to assume, on some level, the goals, motives, and operations of an 'other', such as a teacher, friend, sibling, or parent. This means that she has to temporarily abandon her own agenda. When the teacher assigns the children the activity of copying the same alphabet letter many times on four lines of writing paper, the writer may complete the activity in order to move to an activity she prefers. She does not learn much written language, learn about written language, or learn through written language (Halliday, 1988) during this activity. The system of meaning leads to the learning of a non-language, indeed almost economic, use of alphabetic letters. The teacher's goals of and motives for creating

writers who copy neatly restrict the writer's goals for herself as evidenced in more genuine or authentic writing activities.

The teacher's prevailing goals of classroom order and routine may contribute to the opening of low quality or no zones of proximal development. These are zones of proximal development which have a restrictive, limited, or no effect upon the writer's written language development. These zones involve activities which do not address issues on the writer's writing agenda. The activities contribute to her social web by outlining or defining writing at school.

The pressure exerted by the teacher (the tenor of her relationship with the child-writer) to have the children involved in certain written language activity (field and mode) impose upon the child's goals, motives, and operations. An important part of the fabric of the web of social experience is the beliefs (orientation) of the writer. These beliefs are a function of and are manifested within the system of meanings in a particular situation. The belief system of a writer is effected when another individual or group imposes other beliefs upon the writer. The writer's beliefs (orientation), one facet of the system of meanings the writer brings to school, collide with the teacher's beliefs, particularly when the writer and the teacher have different conceptualizations of written language use.

Figure 4 shows the impact of goals, motives, and operations from outside the individual when those goals, motives, and operations contribute to a low quality zone of proximal development.

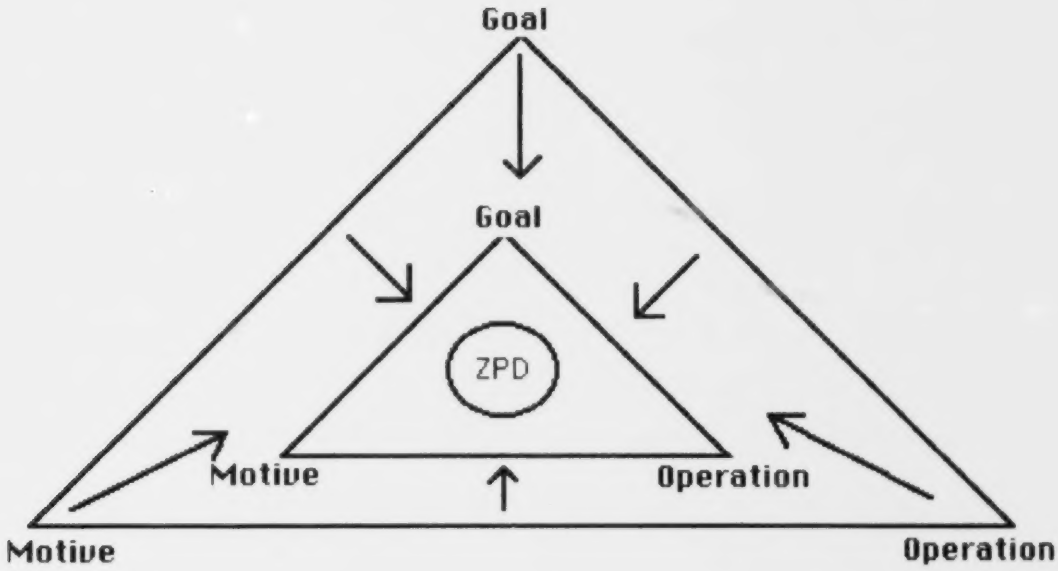

Figure 4. The impact of goals, motives, and operations from outside the individual when those goals, motives, and operations contribute to a low quality zone of proximal development. The inner triangle represents the writer; the outer triangle represents the outside individual or group.

A writer decides whether or not to yield her goals, motives, and operations to those of another. Children typically yield theirs to someone in a position of power or authority. Some writing experiences are so heavily weighted toward the external as to leave little room for interaction with or expression of the writer's internal world. These are experiences which typically result in no zone of proximal development. Little or no writing development can occur under these conditions.

A writer can change the direction of the arrows. She can enter into a writing activity and adopt the goals, motives, and operations of an authority figure. The writer might find, tacitly or explicitly, that the activity overlaps considerably with her own goals, motives, and operations. It is a situation in which two agendas begin to coincide. The writer can then assume ownership of the activity, finding that she can align her goals, motives, and operations with those of another. When the writer's goals, motives, and operations are components of the writing activity, she is at a point where the act of writing itself can influence her written language development as she uses writing to think (Langer & Applebee, 1987) and addresses her agenda. Similarly, a change in any of the components, determinants, or themes of written language at a setting may effect all the facets of written language at that setting.

A writer might be situated within many layers of others' goals, motives, and operations. Most notably, when a school has a writing curriculum reflective of the district level curriculum within a state syllabus responding to national priorities on writing, the student writer is within many layers of goals, motives, and operations. These multiple layers might result in low quality zones of proximal development. The possibility of a high quality situation is discussed next.

Contributing to a High Quality Zone of Proximal Development

A writer can be involved in situations which cultivate her goals, motives, and operations. This is the situation in which another individual or group is involved with the writer in such a way

that the pull is outward, creating the conditions for opening a high quality zone. Figure 5 shows that consistency between the writer's goals, motives, and operations and those goals, motives, and operations which are imposed, required, or suggested from outside the individual may result in the opening of a high quality zone of proximal development.

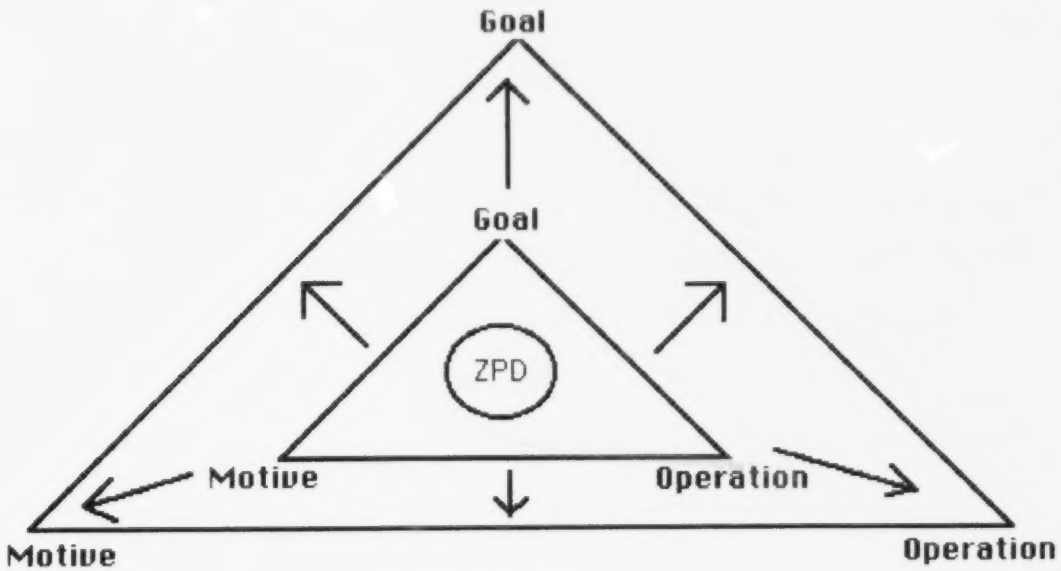

Figure 5. The consistency between the writer's goals, motives, and operations (inner triangle) and those goals, motives, and operations which are imposed, required, or suggested from outside the individual (outer triangle) may result in the opening of a high quality zone of proximal development.

Writing activity which results in the growth, change, or development of the writer occurs within a zone of proximal

development. When the individuals at the setting in which the writer writes have goals, motives, and operations which are extensions of the writer's present state of writing, the writer's tendency is to internalize goals, motives, and operations which complement her agenda. This may involve a move towards convention (Goodman, 1988), and it is also an inventive process. Many of the writer's developmental accomplishments as a writer occur because of the direction, quality, and intensity of the arrows between the two triangles presented in Figure 5.

The relationship between the inner and outer triangles frames the conditions for learning at any given point in time within the social web of experience. The pressure exerted by the outer triangle and it's continuity with the writer's triangle create the nature of the writing activity and determine its quality as an experience. Other components of written language in the framework contribute to the conditions for learning in a similar way. I will not describe each of these possibilities because there are seemingly endless combinations and possibilities.

The two conditions described in these sections, showing one way arrows in terms of the zone of proximal development, are not entirely realistic. Experiences consist of activities which might be weighted in one direction but few experiences are uni-directional; a relationship between the self and others is inherent in most written language use and development. This leads to the discussion of the zone of proximal development as a mutual construction.

The Mutual Construction of a Zone of Proximal Development

Consideration of the zone of proximal development as a mutual construction is consistent with the very nature of the zone. It is a collaborative effort. Although one person or group might 'know more' than the developing writer, the zone is embedded within the social situation which is saturated with many different types and amounts of capabilities. The tenor of relationship between the writer and the complexities of her situation are a major determinant of the writing that is manifested. The field and mode also are determinants. The decision making process, be it tacit or explicit, involving who chooses the field and mode relate back to the tenor of relationships.

The nature of the zone lies within the system of meaning at particular settings. When at home, for example, a writer writes within the boundaries of the home's system of meanings. These may be broad and support much exploration and experimentation with written language (see Meyer, 1992). The goals, motives, and operations at the home setting in Meyer (1992) are consistent with the writer's own goals,motives, and operations (they were a source of those, undoubtedly). This consistency carried mutuality with it. Thus, the writer could open a zone while she worked alone because, in spite of being alone, she was writing within the system of meaning of the home setting which she had internalized and called upon as she wrote. The setting mediated her language development and use.

The zone of proximal development is a mutual construction. To some and varying degrees, all individuals involved within it take

part in it or, by its very definition, it does not exist. The nature of the participation has much to do with the quality of the activity. The addressing of a writer's agenda is embedded in situations and relationships, components of experience. The relationships I mean here are the ones between the writer's goals, motives, and operations, and those of another individual or group. Figure 6 shows the mutual construction of the zone of proximal development. The nature of the relationships between the inner triangle, the writer, and the outer triangle, another group or individual, is critical in determining the quality of the zone.

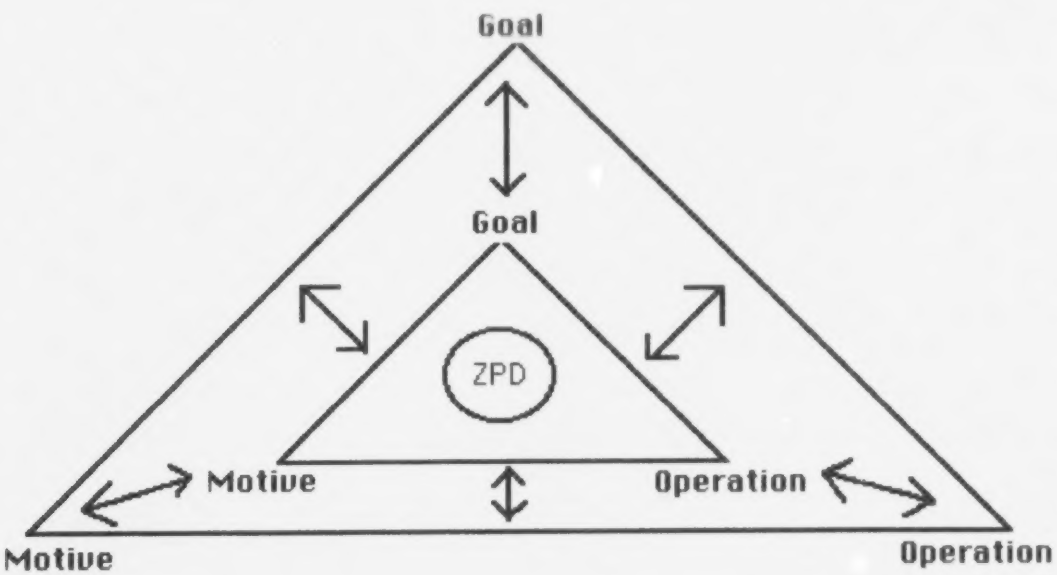

Figure 6. The mutual construction of the zone of proximal development. The writer is represented by the inner triangle; other individuals or groups or situations are represented by the outer triangle. There may be many layers of outer triangles.

The two-headed arrows in Figure 6 imply the possibilities of sensitivity between the writer and those around her. These are instructional possibilities as well as possibilities for the components and themes of written language development and use. Some settings in which a writer writes offer greater sensitivity to the directionality of the arrows, being elaborative and supportive of risk-taking, ownership, use, and development. Other situations are restrictive.

When the goals, motives, and operations of the writer are in line with and supported by those around her, she may open a zone of proximal development. She may initiate the opening of a zone when her situation affords her the permission to do so. Her initiation may be as a response to the situation or as a response to an invitation offered to her. The nature of the relationship between the writer and those around her serves as the mediator for the writer.

The heuristic function. A writer can use writing to organize writing, such as with the use of a chart for recording information (Smith, 1983). Yet, there appears to be another facet to the heuristic function. It seems that virtually every nonhabitual writing activity in which a writer engages is heuristic in that she uses the activity in a constant state of assessing what she knows and what she needs to know to continue her development. In this way it involves the writer in identifying her agenda and deciding how to address her agenda--a heuristic.

The heuristic function of written language involves the use of language to communicate an organized written response (Smith,

1983). It also involves learning through language and learning about it (Halliday, 1988). Each piece of writing, then, has the potential for being a statement of where the writer is, where the writer is going, what the writer is learning, and what the writer wants to know. Whether or not the potential is realized has to do with the quality of the zone of proximal development at the particular setting.

The Writer's Experience

Figure 2 also serves to show a writer's experience (Dewey, 1938). I have discussed the framework as being useful in explaining one instance of written language activity, via the components, and in explaining instances over time via the themes. Employing the framework in a discussion of experience involves focusing on the framework over many writing activities across extended periods of time and across many settings. The quality of the zones of proximal development at the setting tend to become consistent over time unless those involved in the construction of the zones are actively seeking changes. On the one hand, in a school situation in which the teacher assumes an authoritarian role, the children will not be allowed to contribute considerably to the construction of zones and, therefore, will not be involved in quality experiences. On the other hand, classrooms do exist which allow children to actively contribute to the construction of high quality zones of proximal development (Guilfoyle, 1988; Wortman, 1991). The use and development of written language, then, is systemic and varies across settings, people, and activity. The systems of meaning in

which a writer writes are defined by the components, determinants, and themes within the social situation.

Dewey's (1938) explication of continuity within experience focuses on collections of experiences and how the collections effect subsequent experiences. This has to do with the differences between settings which allow for genuine writing experiences and those which are setups (Harste, 1991) rather than settings. Continuity, then, deals with empowerment. Some settings enable the writer to explore and experiment and develop her written language in such a way that it will be a vehicle for developing and addressing her written language agenda over the course of her life. Even if a particular setting does not support the writer, having a different setting which does support her will offer her some quality writing experience.

Internalization

Vygotsky (1978) refers to "the internal reconstruction of an external operation [as] *internalization* " (p.56). Moffett (1983) writes:

> Reading assimilates one person's composed inner speech into another person's ongoing inner stream so that one's composition temporarily restructures the other's consciousness. Writing temporarily restructures one's own consciousness as one focuses, edits, and revises the inner stream so as to act on another's. (p. 4)

This parallels Dewey's (1938) notion of the internal and external in experience. The writer internalizes the social processes (uses) of written language across the many settings of her life. Each setting is a complex system of meaning. The writer carries her agenda

across all settings and at the same time learns the parameters and boundaries of writing activity in different settings. With each school year comes anew the challenge of finding those parameters, learning how much to risk, and finding what questions and suggestions are safe to ask and offer. Thus, the interaction between internal and external is a continuous dialectic across settings. The internal is a system which is constantly growing and changing and it is the writer's heuristic for understanding the nature of writing at each particular setting of her life.

Internalization of the specific social system of meaning in which one writes is a necessity for the survival and success of the writer. The impact of field, tenor, and mode upon the point of origin is important in this consideration. A writer must know when to yield the point of origin, and therefore, to some degree, her agenda and ownership to another. Yielding the components of written language implies the writer is yielding her agenda. She must be sensitive to the possibility or impossibility of negotiating her agenda at the setting. She knows that in school she might have to yield to the power figure in a relationship in order to succeed. She must know, tacitly or explicitly, what the one in the position of power requires from her. This is determined by the tenor of the relationships between the writer and someone in a position of power or authority with whom the writer must deal. The writer learns whether or not she can be a point of origin for writing activity. She must learn this by understanding and internalizing the writing situation, the system of meaning in which she writes. Over time and many years in and out of school, the written language experience is

defined. The nature of experience becomes apparent in the variety of ways in which a writer chooses to write (Emig, 1971).

This theoretical framework of written language development and use is social and individual. It involves the individual internalizing the social situation and assumes that such a process is unique to each individual. It is that individuality which manifests itself as the variety of writers in the world. That same individual uniqueness manifests itself in the wide variety of individual writing agendas which teachers, researchers, and parents will see when they allow children's written language activity to be the vehicle for learning written language, learning through it, and learning about it (Halliday, 1988). A writer is continually learning about written language as it occurs at particular settings. She internalizes the themes of various settings and writes accordingly. The quality of the writer's experiences--her uses of written language-- will determine the quality of the writer's ongoing development. This concludes my explication of the theoretical framework for written language development and use. In the next section I present some implications of and uses for the framework.

Implications

Within the classroom the teacher might change the nature of written language activity. Vygotsky (1962) wrote that "instruction precedes development and leads it; it might be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening function" (p.104). The task for the teacher becomes the identification of and action in keeping with the

writer's agenda because that agenda marks the writer's 'ripening functions'.

The establishment and exploration of a child's writing agenda can be incorporated into the daily life and processes of the classroom. The teacher may articulate her role in addressing the child's agenda. By articulate, I mean that the teacher is able to explain the written language activity which occurs in her writing program as those activities unfold, perhaps using the framework presented in this paper. By engaging in this process of explanation (articulation) she is demonstrating that she is not a technician (Shannon, 1989); she is a thinking and responsible professional. The teacher, using the theoretical framework, can move from articulating her written language program to herself to explaining the program to others. Reflective teachers (Schon, 1987) will consider articulation an essential facet of professionalism.

Teachers may want be able to substantiate their views based on their own practices, the literature on written language, and the writing that children are doing in their classrooms. This means that they might articulate the themes, components, and determinants of written language as these are manifested in their classroom. Perhaps the framework presented in this paper will impact research, as well. Thus, classroom practices and research will become more theoretical through a process of articulation.

Articulate teachers and researchers help others to understand the changes they are making and the findings they wish to share. Articulation, and the teacher development inherent in it rests upon partnership and collaboration. I suggest that articulate teachers and

researchers who actively address children's written language agendas by helping children articulate and address their own agendas move beyond a deficit orientation (Alterger & Bird, 1982). These teachers and researchers become aware of and change the determinants, components, and themes of written language activity within their classroom. They respond to and help address children's agendas in writing. Articulation offers open, attentive, and responsive communication aimed at quality experiences for young writers within a theoretical framework.

Using the theoretical framework of this study could enable teachers and researchers to become aware of what they want to know about written language development and use. The framework could help them to describe the written language program in classrooms and focus them on justifying that program. The theoretical framework, because of its theoretical foundations, may offer teachers, researchers, program developers, parents, and administrators the substantiation they need to justify programs for written language use which are specific to the writers at a particular setting.

Staff development, preservice, and inservice teacher education focused on studying the themes of written language development and use as they manifest themselves within and beyond classroom walls may provide insight into writing programs.

For many teachers and researchers the thought of thirty writers involved in a process of constructing a writing setting with the teacher, each child having his or her own agenda, might be overwhelming. This is where time becomes crucial. The time that

was formerly allocated to worksheets and practice of skills which writers do not need may be reallocated to writing for purposes which have greater meaning for the writers. Then, in the context of their own writing, the children will explore and experiment and raise questions about writing. The body of their questions, both direct questions and those implicit in their writing, form the essence of writing activity in the classroom. When children are valued as learners in school, they will carry their enthusiasm home.

Perhaps the most sensitive issue for a teacher to address is the determinants of written language activity in their classrooms. Looking at the fields, they might find themselves needing to abandon some dearly loved practices which are inconsistent with the themes and components which work best with and for the children. Examining the tenor of relationships they have with the children involves looking into themselves quite intensely and dealing with issues of personal as well as professional growth.

Exploring the modes of written language may be the easiest and most exciting determinant for the teacher as she brings many types of writing implements and surfaces to the classroom. After examining the field, tenor, and mode within the classroom, some teachers may go on to examine the tenor of their relationships with parents. The teacher's role changes from director of specific (and restrictive) writing activities to active kidwatcher (Y. Goodman, 1985) and 'kidresponder'. The researcher looks for a way to support this role, being an advocate for change (Moll and Diaz, 1987) and co-researcher with the teacher (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

Implications for Future Studies

The theoretical framework I developed during this research may be useful in helping those who live and work with children to understand written language development and use at and across settings. Gaining this understanding is a way of assessing written language activity. A future study might involve the use of the theoretical framework in describing a writing program at a school, especially since an important first step of assessment is description. The theoretical framework might be applied to ranges of homes, classrooms, various grade levels, schools, and school systems in order to gain insights into its usefulness as a tool for describing, evaluating, developing programs, building relationships, and staff development.

Researchers need to build relationships with a broad spectrum of communities so that we might gain access to homes in a wide variety of communities. Our understanding of the writing activities in many homes and classrooms will help in the development of home and classroom writing activities which make sense and respect the child's writing agenda, focusing on her life as the point of origin for her development as a writer.

One call here is for more classroom studies which include the out-of-school lives of the children. We need to know more about writing beyond the walls of the school. Children's knowledge of written language remains transparent (Newman, 1991) to teachers when the children are required to set aside their own written language agendas. As researchers, we need to explore children's agendas and see what happens as we actively involve the home life

of the children via the children themselves as agents of their lives out of school and via relationships built with parents and others who share in the lives of the children.

Exploring agendas, leadership issues, and the home/school relationship means examining the conditions which we must provide to empower writers. Future studies might involve the exploration of these conditions through the lense of the theoretical framework described here. We need to know more about the experiences and activities which have an effect on young writers. Increasingly, research is showing that the classrooms of children, regardless of the socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and more, can be extremely supportive of literacy growth when those classrooms are rich in literacy activity (Guilfoyle, 1988; Wortman, 1991) emanating from the children's agendas. Knowing about the conditions which empower young writers means knowing more about the themes, components, and determinants which make an impact on their written language use and development. The theoretical framework presented here is one vehicle for coming to an understanding of those conditions.

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